



**Disability Rights Connecticut**  
"Connecticut's protection and advocacy system"

**846 Wethersfield Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06114**

February 14, 2023

**Re: Testimony of Sheldon Toubman before the Human Services Committee  
Regarding HB 6616 (HUSKY for Immigrants)**

Good afternoon, Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest and other distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Sheldon Toubman and I am the Litigation Attorney at Disability Rights CT. We are the Protection and Advocacy System for CT, serving individuals with a full range of physical, behavioral, intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am here to testify about the impact of HB 6616 on people with disabilities.

The HUSKY program is in general funded jointly by the state and by the federal Medicaid agency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. One of the critical groups which receives essential health care services under the Medicaid program is low-income individuals with disabilities, both children and adults.

But one sub-group of people with disabilities who are barred from access to those services is individuals who are the same in every way except that they are undocumented, and, in the case of disabled individuals over 21 (who are not pregnant), are either undocumented or are subject to the five-year bar on federal Medicaid reimbursement despite being legally present.

Without access to reliable health insurance coverage, as this bill would accomplish in stages next year for individuals up to age 25, serious medical conditions will go unattended. Some of these individuals, lacking regular access to treatment, will deteriorate to the point of needing expensive hospital-based medical care -- which will then be provided, at least initially, because of the requirements imposed on hospitals under the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act.

Under this bill, children or young adults who qualify in every other way for Medicaid coverage, except for their immigration status, will acquire regular health care coverage. This will assure timely treatment for many low-income people with disabilities and, in some cases, prevent permanent harm or death from untreated conditions.

I note that there certainly are other gaps in our current HUSKY/Medicaid coverage impacting people with disabilities. Our medical insurance safety net leaves many people with significant disabilities behind. Other bills specifically focused on people with disabilities are being heard by this committee. But providing state funding for coverage of HUSKY benefits for individuals lacking the immigration status which qualifies one for federal Medicaid reimbursement will assure coverage for older children and young adults with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about this bill.